

# TESTING A PROTOTYPE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL FUND FOR WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT (CREW)



Fishing Bay in Cuba

## Project Information

**Implementing Agency:** IADB, UNEP

**Executing Agency:** CAR/RCU, NEAs

**Geographical Scope:** Regional – Caribbean

**Participating Countries:** Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago

**GEF Strategic Priority:** IW SO1 & 2 –SP2

**Project Duration:** June 2011 – June 2015

**GEF Financing:** \$20,000,000

**Total Co-financing:** \$251,702,403

**Total Project Cost:** \$271,702,403

**Website:** <http://gefcrew.org/>

## Problems Faced by the Region

The Caribbean is a collection of 700 islands, reefs and cays with a combined population of about 40 million people. As the region continues to develop economically, urban centers expand increasing urban rural drift, growth in population and unplanned development. Land-based pollution of coastal areas is an increasing challenge because of the increased volume of wastewater from domestic and industrial sources. The degradation of the Caribbean marine environment including the discharge of untreated wastewater is a serious concern for those countries whose livelihoods depend heavily on their natural marine resources. Numerous scientific studies, including UNEP/GPA's 2006 report on the *State of the Marine Environment*, singled out untreated wastewater entering the world's oceans and seas as the most serious problem contributing to marine pollution. UNEP/GPA estimates that as much as 85% of all wastewater entering the Caribbean Sea is currently lacking treatment. The Pan American Health Organization (2001) estimated that more than half of the households in the region lack sewer connections and that only 17% of the connected households are attached to appropriate collection and treatment systems. Valuable ecosystem services are negatively impacted and the phenomenon is a serious concern for people whose livelihoods depend on the natural marine resources, for the public health and in terms of shoreline protection as the region develops its response to the threat of climate change. There is thus urgent need to increase wastewater treatment in the Caribbean, which at present is far below needed levels.

Investments of such water utilities are often hampered by under-capitalization, insufficient investment and lack of appropriate policy and legislative measures. There is further a need for adequate, affordable financing available for investments in wastewater management in the Wider Caribbean Region.

## Solutions Proposed by the Project

The Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CREW), seeks to provide sustainable financing for the wastewater sector, support policy and legislative reform, and foster regional dialogue and knowledge exchange among key stakeholders in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The main objective of the project is to *“create pilot financial mechanisms that can be used to provide sustainable financing for environmentally sound and cost-effective wastewater management.”*

The project comprises of five components:

Component I Investment and innovative financing for wastewater management

Component II Reforms for wastewater management

Component III Communications, outreach and information exchange

Component IV Monitoring and evaluation

Component V Project management

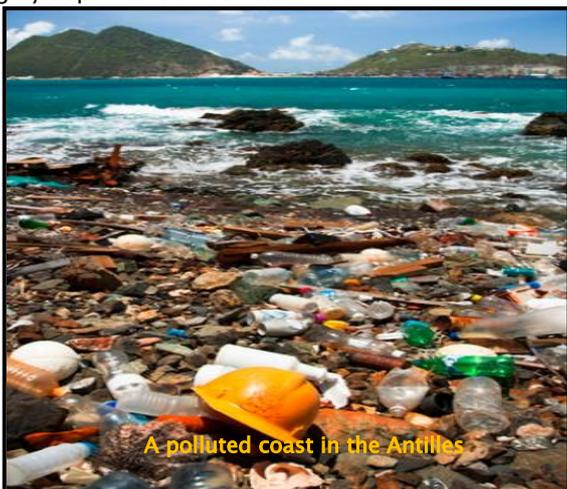
**Main Results and Achievements  
(as of September 2013)**

Overall, the CReW project is gathering momentum. Three of the countries (Jamaica, Belize and Guyana) have established their pilot financing mechanisms and for Jamaica and Belize the first generation projects are progressing. Many significant capacity building activities have been completed and are in progress; a number of regional workshops for wastewater professionals working in utilities and environmental sector have been held with the support of the Water Center in Monterrey, Mexico. Key aspects of the communication strategy have been implemented. A total of 4 newsletters were published ([www.gefcrew.org](http://www.gefcrew.org)). The project has also launched a Facebook site intended to widen the outreach.

A Project Coordination Group (PCG) is fully staffed and operational. Working relationships have been established with the Inter-agency Coordination Group (IACG) and five Executing Agencies (EAs). Updates from the three technical components are provided below.

**Component I: Investment and innovative financing for wastewater management**

Four pilot countries have been selected and agreements have been signed with all these countries to facilitate disbursements of funds to enable the establishment of pilot financing mechanisms. Funds have been disbursed to Jamaica and Belize and have yet to be disbursed to the other countries due in one instance to delays in operationalisation of the fund and in the other finalisation of the first generation project. The first generation project in Jamaica involves the rehabilitation of 13 wastewater treatment facilities and in Belize the expansion of coverage in upgrade of the Belmopan Plant and construction of a new plant in Placencia a region which is highly dependent on tourism.



**Component II: Reforms for wastewater management**

Baseline studies in the English-speaking countries have been completed. The outcomes of these have enabled a bilateral discussion with the countries to outline their national capacity building programmes. Four agreements have been finalized and three are in the process of development. Several workshops have been executed in the region and more are planned. These have focused on administration of revolving funds, facilitation and wastewater management. In addition, as part of capacity building efforts and as part of the project legacy the project is working on the establishment of online course as part of the continuing education of wastewater professional and encourage research and professional exchanges in the region.

**Component III: Communication, outreach and information exchange**

Different modalities have been utilized in order to reach and inform decision-makers, donors and the wider public of the project's progress. These include publication of newspapers, launching of a Facebook site and production of videos. A project website, e-bulletins and communication guidelines for the executing agencies have further been established. The Project has also supported key regional conferences including CWWA, and CEF.

